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MCCC NEWS

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Commodore/Federal Express Announce Unprecedented Customer Service Program

West Chester, PA., April 19, 1990

Commodore Business Machines, Inc. today announced the establishment of Commodore Express, a new 24-hour toll-free "helpline" and door-to-door customer service program. The service is being offered to new Amiga 500 owners in the U.S. in cooperation with Federal Express Corporation.

"Commodore is dedicated to customer satisfaction," said Jim Reeder, Commodore vice president for customer satisfaction. "Commodore Express is the first of a number of innovative new services to be offered by Commodore in support of that commitment."

Commodore Express is part of an aggressive new customer service package designed with the home computer user in mind. The program was developed by Commodore in conjunction with the company's recent introduction of the Amiga 500 into the consumer channel.

The comprehensive program includes:

- A 24-hour toll-free "helpline" service offering new Amiga 500 owners the availability of ongoing assistance in setting up and operating their Amiga 500s; and
- Free pick-up and return computer delivery for in-warranty repairs.

Commodore Express' free pick-up and return service applies to in-warranty repairs only and requires proof-of-purchase. This program will be made available to all Amiga 500 owners in the U.S. who purchased their computer after January 1, 1990.

"Setting up and operating a computer can be intimidating, especially for new users," Reeder said, adding that even the simplest manual is often too technical. "Commodore Express makes the prospect of owning a computer easier by providing home users with ongoing service and support that lasts long after the sale."

Further details regarding this program are available by contacting Commodore's Customer Satisfaction Department at 1200 Wilson Drive, West Chester, PA 19380.

Commodore Business Machines, Inc., based in West Chester, PA., manufactures a complete line of computers and peripherals for the business, education, government and consumer markets.

The multitasking Amiga• line includes the Commodore Amiga 500™, the Commodore Amiga 2000™, and two enhanced products: the Commodore Amiga 2000HD™ and the Commodore Amiga 2500/30™. Commodore's line of MS DOS• compatible computers includes the Colt™ and Professional Series III™.

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Never Mind

Another Great Game by Psygnosis
Amiga Review by Bill Raecke

Psygnosis is a company famous for games that feature beautiful graphics and mind numbing action. Never Mind is a bit of a departure for them, but it works. The graphics, as always, are beautiful. And the action remains -- it's just not quite as active as usual. What has been added is a puzzle concept.

Here's how it works. You are placed into a three dimensional room. The room has three surfaces -- think of them as a floor and two walls. Each of these surfaces can be three two dimensional; that is, there can be what amount to stairs on each of the three surfaces. That makes the geometry of the rooms rather complex. Your character can stand upright and move around on any of the three surfaces. You move from surface to surface via warp tubes. The problem with warp tubes is that you don't know where they will take you until you try. Every screen must be learned.

That brings us to the object of the game. As you enter a room you will be a picture on one of the surfaces. If you pay close attention, you will see the tiles that make up the picture become scrambled and, in some cases, scattered around the room. Your goal is to put all the pieces into their proper places. You start each room with a blank tile in your possession. Move to a tile that you wish to pick up and press the fire button. The tile in your possession will be replaced with the one you are standing on.

That doesn't sound very difficult does it? But I haven't mentioned the time limit yet. The first screens allow 45 seconds. Later screens will vary with the complexity. I can only promise that you won't have enough time until you practice.

And the time limit isn't the only thing standing in the way. There are chess pieces on some screens that move around the room picking up tiles and moving them to random locations. There are islands on some screens linked by moving causeways which you must traverse. There are dissolving tiles. There are transporter tiles that will take you to an entirely different room. On some levels there is more than one picture to be reassembled -- and sometimes the pictures are animated, making it more difficult to tell where the pieces really belong.

Time for a complaint: Each time you fail to solve a level, you are re-started back at the beginning of the game. According to the instructions, if you make it far enough, you will be given a password so that you can start from that point and progress on from there. I don't know -- I haven't gotten that far yet. But I would much prefer to be able to stay on a level until I have conquered it and then never see it again.

The complaint is a minor one. Overall, I rate the game very highly. There are two hundred and fifty rooms in all. It should keep you busy for quite some time. If you like a challenge that combines reflexes and brain power, give it a try.

FatTracks

Save Your Money
Amiga Review by Harold Williams

The newest disk copy program to hit the market is FatTracks v1.0, from Micro Systems International. This package is advertised as being "the most powerful nibbler available" and will "copy those super protection schemes found on European games." FatTracks just doesn't live up to the hype. Although two nibblers (Nibble A and Nibble B with index sync on and off) are included in the package, this copier still relies on two different parameter copiers to handle the majority of the titles that the documentation lists as copyable. The list of about 190 titles is not included with the package, but is mailed after MSI receives your registration card. This list is a BIG disappointment. If you own Raw Copy, MSI's other disk copy utility, you will find about 170 of these titles are also listed on the Raw Copy

"FatTracks is being advertised as the premier nibbler, while Raw Copy is advertised as the best parameter copier ... of the titles listed by FatTracks that do not appear on the Raw Copy list, every one of them requires a FatTracks parameter..."

V1.3g list of copyable titles. Raw Copy also includes two nibblers (oddly enough these nibbler copiers are also called Nibble A and Nibble B with index sync on and off). FatTracks is being advertised as the premier nibbler, while Raw Copy is advertised as the best parameter copier. Both of these products rely on both techniques. Is MSI trying to sell us essentially the same product twice? It is interesting to note that of the titles listed by FatTracks that do not appear on the Raw Copy list, every one of them requires a FatTracks parameter copy, none of them are copied using the nibble routines.

Attempting to copy a disk with FatTracks can be a real test of endurance. I found the list of copyable titles to be only partially reliable. Some worked as stated, other titles could be copied but required the use of different routines other than the ones listed, and some simply did not work. The procedure for using the nibble routines involves as many as 4 attempts to produce a working copy. These nibble routines are the last resort when a parameter copy is not available (or does not work). I attempted to create backups of several titles using the nibble routines. I was only successful on disks that I had been previously able to back up using other disk copy utilities.

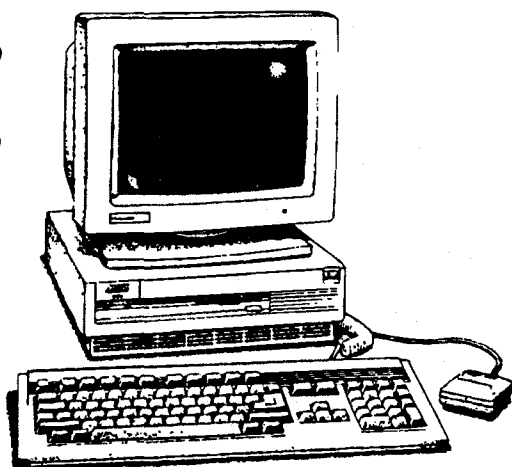
I found FatTracks to be just about useless as an addition to the existing disk copy programs. This product will require a major upgrade to be worth the asking price of \$60. MSI should have included the new parameters on Raw Copy, and kept this product off the market!

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Shipping Bits

How Data Is Transferred From Computer to Computer Information from John Ware

Have you ever wondered what was really going on when a file was being copied from one computer to another or how Bulletin Board works? Or how a printer "knows" what character to print? The answers to both are closely related. In fact it is easy to "fool" one computer into thinking another computer is a printer. A lot is involved but none of it is confusing if you examine each part separately.

The most common form of a computer is the digital computer. This machine works by using only two different voltage levels. Think of these as either on or off with nothing in between, like a light switch. It is either on or off. You have probably heard a computer being described as either an 8 bit, 16 bit, or 32 bit machine. This term relates to how big a single memory location is. Most computers are 8 bit machines such as the Commodore 64, Radio Shack Color computer, and the Atari 800. In fact all of these use the same microprocessor chip, with the exception of the 64. It has a slightly different version of the same microprocessor. The Macintosh and Amigas use basically the same 16 or 32 bit microprocessor chip. There are some differences such as speed, additional instructions, and a couple of other things -- but that is another story. As far as this article goes, the only difference is how wide the memory is.

A single memory location or address is 8 bits wide. This allows 256 different patterns of ones and zeroes to be stored. These can represent several things such as part of an address, part or all of a single instruction, a text character, or anything that can be represented by binary numbers. At this level they are all the same, just one of 256 possible numbers. The real meaning is determined by how a program interprets them. From our viewpoint they are either part of a program or data used by a program. This data can be a text file, a picture, or possibly encoded sound. All can be considered as a file even if it is actually a file even though it is usually called a program.

Let's assume that the file in question is a text file, such as this article. Every letter is stored in the computer memory as a number. Every character including a space, punctuation mark, carriage return, and line feed takes up one memory location. There is a standard that says that a capital letter A will be stored as a decimal 65. Almost every computer EXCEPT the Commodore 64 uses this standard. Almost all printer manuals will have a copy of this standard somewhere in them. This is called ASCII. It turns out that there are only 128 defined characters. Out of these, 32 are not printing characters. They are control codes such as a linefeed, formfeed, backspace, and so on. These provide control functions. A space is actually a character that prints nothing but takes up space just the same as any printable character. Think of it as "printing" a bunch of white dots on white paper.

A text file from one computer can be used on most

other computers with almost no changes. The exceptions are things like embedded control characters and format commands. WordPerfect is one example of many text editors that allow you to save a text file as pure ASCII or as a formatted file. If you plan on uploading a text file to someone that uses a different text editor than yours, save the file as pure ASCII and send that file. This almost always gets around the file incompatible problems. What few mistakes that remain are usually easy to edit out. Some word processors have an import function. These convert files from one format to another.

"...two machines can use the same code and files. But how do you get from one to the other?"

Program files and most data files will use all 256 possible bit patterns. These files are usually computer and/or program specific. If you do not have the same program and make of computer the file will be of no value to you. There are exceptions such as a BASIC program. Most of the time these are a form of an ASCII file. All you have to do is change the commands from one version of BASIC to another. The same holds true for compilers such as FORTRAN or "C". The source program is just another ASCII file. The compiled code is another matter. It is machine specific. Assembler source is also just another ASCII file. Programs such as AutoCad have several file formats that you can use to transfer files from one machine to another. AutoCad is unique in one respect. A file generated on a PC based version is file compatible with a main-frame version. GEOS on the 64 and MacPaint on a Mac are both bit image graphics programs. There are import/export utilities for both that allow sharing files.

In all of the above cases the files are just a series of 8 bit numbers. Therefore they can be treated the same when it comes to file transfers. If the two machines are the same or can read and write the same disk formats, the easy way is to simply use a disk to transfer the file. But as with most things in life, things are not always that easy. A prime example is two PCs, one with a 5 1/4" disk and the other with a 3" disk. The two machines can use the same code and files. But how do you get from one to the other? How about two machines with different disk formats? One solution is to find a third machine that is disk format compatible with the other two. Not many of us have a spare computer laying around. Or how about a Bulletin Board?

This is where telecommunications comes to the rescue.

These are usually a dedicated computer and a modem or two with a BBS program. A modem is just a computer to telephone line coupling device. These convert the voltage levels from the computer to a series of tones and back. With rare exceptions, the phone company will not allow you to connect ANYTHING directly to a phone line. In addition to that problem a phone line will not pass a direct current from one line to another. They only work with tones and only within a limited frequency range. While most of the phone system is now digital in nature, I know of no one who has a digital phone line in their home. It is available but you don't want to know the price. The wires from the average house to the nearest exchange have not changed much since the early 1900's. As a result a modem is the only thing practical for most of us.

Another problem occurs here. A computer works on memory in 8 bit wide chunks but a phone line has only 2 wires. As a result, the 8 bits cannot all be sent or received at the same time. The computer gets the data from memory in an 8 bit chunk. Internal to the computer is a chip or a program that sends these bits, along with a few others used for timing and control, out to the modem one bit at a time. The modem converts the bit to a tone and sends it on to the phone company to do their magic. The reverse happens when data is received. In addition to changing voltage levels to tones and back a typical modem will also provide an indication of another modem, if there is a dial tone, if the called line is busy, will answer your phone line, and will tell you if your phone is ringing. In fact, most modems function exactly the same as you do when you use a phone, the only difference being that you send and receive tones directly. Some of the neurosurgeons even think that the brain is somewhat digital in nature so there is probably less differences than we think!

If you can get the two computers close enough it is possible to connect the two machines together with nothing more than a few feet of wire without using modems. It is easy to "fake" out the computers into thinking that the other one is a modem. By doing things this way you can eliminate the cost of two modems and send data several times faster than over phone lines. You can even use the same terminal program that you normally use with modems. The secret lies in knowing how the RS-232 standard works. There are many good books on the subject and you should read at least one if you plan on doing much hardware hacking. In the rare case where you do not have a terminal

program for one computer but desire to get a copy of a text file, just wire up the receiving computer to look like a printer to the other one. Put the terminal program on the receiving computer into receive mode and simply "print" the text file. For programs just list to the "printer".

Most telecom programs allow you to receive or send a file directly to and from disk. They also let you do this from a section of computer memory called a buffer. Some such as Bobs Term Pro for the C64/128 also have an option to convert an ASCII file to PETSCII, Commodore's version of ASCII, and back. All have a terminal mode. This is nothing more than a program that converts the computer into a terminal. One of the neatest ones I have seen for the 64 is the Qlink terminal disk. Most of the menu graphics are actually on the DISK! The text is all that is sent. If you ever stop to think how much data is required to draw a figure on the screen and move it around you really do see the speedup in the screens.

A typical term program will have several file transfer protocols such as Xmodem, Ymodem, and Punter. These are just several versions of checksum protocols used to check for transmission errors. When an error is found the bad block is just retransmitted. Typically these work by adding up all the 8 bit bytes to get a 16 bit result. This two byte total is added to the block being sent. At the receiving end each of the bytes is added to the running total. After the last check sum bit is received the receiving computer compares its answer against what was sent. If both are not the same then the receiving computer asks the sending computer to send the bad block again. Another one is Kermit. It is more complicated but works on the same principle.

Sometimes you can call a BBS that does not support one of your transfer protocols. All is not lost -- just use a plain file transfer and hope for the best. In this case you usually get the best results at 300 baud. In fact I use this method when accessing mainframe computers with a 64. The 40-80 column format difference is a little hard to deal with. The typical telecom program will have some method to set the baud rate. This is simply how fast the data is sent. Most boards work at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Some control bits are required and these will be the the number of data bits, parity, and stop bits. As a starting point I suggest you set this up as 8N1, (for 8 data bits, no parity, and 1 stop bit) and use 300 baud. If you get Garbage just change to 8O1 and try again. If you are still getting garbage try another

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combination. Sooner or later you will hit the right combination. Stay with 8 bits if possible because most transfer protocols require 8 bits.

If you have never tried telecommunications you are missing one of the best uses of a computer yet! It is possible to access thousands of data bases world wide and meet many new and interesting people. Most BB systems exist to share a common interest. In the Metroplex area these range from dating services, churches, chess, news services, stamp collecting, and other interests. Most have a form of electronic private mail. Just the thing to keep in touch with friends without calling at supper. Most computer clubs even have private BB systems for members only. You can often find quite good public domain programs and utilities. While telecommunications is not for everybody, if you spend an evening or two with your modem and term program you just might find out you like it.

Nothing can be more annoying than answering a phone and getting an earfull of modem (with the possible

exception of the local siding company with a deal to good to be true). To avoid this there are a few things to remember.

Like calling a BBS number the first time with a phone. If you do not hear a modem on the first ring or two, hang up and cross the number off your list. Most require some form of verification to become a registered user. The typical dialogue requests a name and phone number. I suggest that the first time on a new board that you logon as guest or just looking. Read the screens closely and see if the BBS has anything you are interested in. If it does just logon again with the requested info. In either case most will allow leaving a note to the system operator. Tell them your thoughts. It only takes a minute or two and it helps the operators. If the BBS has nothing of interest to you do not call again as most have only one phone line. Why prevent others from using it?

The main thing to remember is that a little courtesy and consideration goes a long way. At first it may be confusing but remember -- we all started the same way -- confused!

Thought For The Month

"About the time we
think we can make
ends meet, somebody
moves the ends."

...Herbert Hoover

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Amiga Library News

Public Domain and Shareware Picks From Bill Raecke

Mostra by Sebastiano Vigna

Picture viewing utilities is one thing that there has never been a shortage of in the Amiga world. Just when one seems to do everything that anyone could want, a new one comes along and outdoes it. Until now, most of us had settled in on SuperView. It does all the standard resolutions including overscans and is even able to display animations in the standard .anim format. Recently, however, a couple of problems cropped up with the introduction of the new Sliced HAM (SHAM) and Dynamic HAM graphic modes. SuperView is not equipped to handle either of those. This meant that in order to be able to show anything, you needed at least three show programs sitting around and you had to remember which to use when.

Mostra to the rescue. Mostra has support for all the standard resolutions -- the same as SuperView. But Mostra also provides support for SHAM pictures. It also provides indirect support for Dynamic HAM in that, when it recognizes that you have asked it to display a Dynamic HAM picture, it will call the Dynamic HAM viewer (DYNA-SHOW) for you. That means that you can eliminate one command from your c: directory. And it means that when you type in that command to view a picture, you don't have to worry about which command to use -- just use Mostra and let it do the thinking for you.

Of course there are a lot of options available as well:

- Mostra will do pattern matching to show a batch of pictures and will even recursively scan all directories during the search.
- You can tell Mostra to use a black background between pictures for a cleaner display during slideshows.
- You turn color cycling on or off either by a command option or with the TAB key.
- You may specify the length of time to display a picture.
- You can tell Mostra to fade the picture in and out.
- You can use double buffering for fast picture changes. (Load picture number two while picture number one is still being displayed.)

There are lots of other options as well, but you get the idea. Mostra has taken over as my standard picture viewing utility. I recommend it highly. Mostra is released as shareware from Italy with a \$20 requested donation. You can find it on MCCC-A_190.

FReq by Joe Algermissen

Yes, that's right -- this one comes from a member of MCCC, Joe Algermissen. Do you have any favorite programs that are really nice except for one glaring omission -- no file requester? Who doesn't! Would you like to be able to add one? This is your chance.

A while back, a requester library was placed into the public domain by Colin Fox and Bruce Dawson. Joe's program, FReq (File Requester Front End) uses this library.

Here's how the program works. Simply type "FReq command arguments path". The first thing that happens is that a file requester is displayed on the screen. When you select a file, the program that you specified with the command is executed on that file. There are several options including the option to reopen the requester after executing the command.

An example? How about "FReq -r Mostra". This will bring up a file requester, show the selected picture using Mostra, and then bring up the file requester again so you can select the next picture. (The -r option is the "reopen requester" feature.)

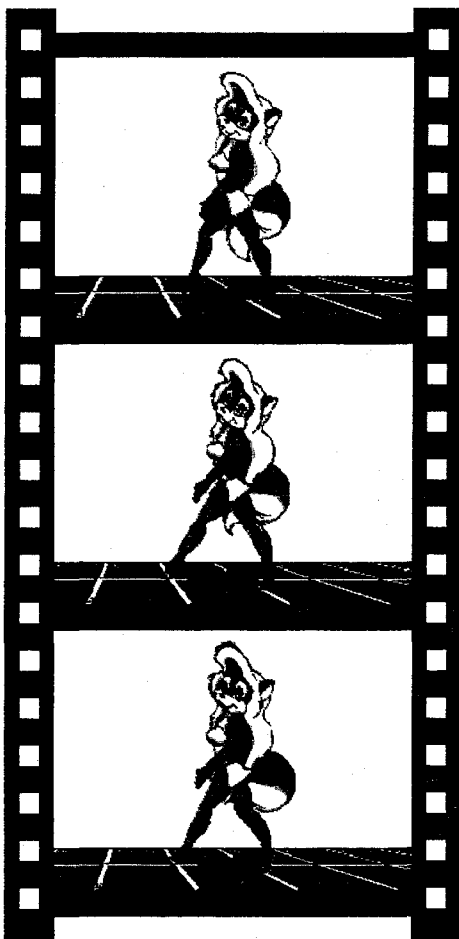
FReq is available on MCCC-A_191. Give it a try.

Animations by Eric Schwartz

These are, simply put, some of the best animations I have seen. The art is delightful. The running time is long enough to really develop a story line -- and the stories are truly original and funny. The animation is up to standard cartoon fare. (In some instances it might easily be mistaken for live TV.)

Most are what Eric calls Aerotoons. Aerotoons are a series of cartoons featuring animated aircraft. To get a feel for what the art is like, picture an F-16 with a personality like "The Little Engine That Could" and you have the idea. Some of my favorites are the "Swiss Army F-16" (have any idea what its capabilities might be?) and "Stealthy Maneuver" featuring the new stealth bomber. Also included in the series is a cartoon starring Wiley Coyote and the Road Runner.

I can't explain in detail what they are about because to do so would spoil the humor. Just take my word for it that they are terrific. In all, there are four disks full of animations. Some require extra memory. Check out MCCC-A_193 through MCCC-A_196. Don't miss these. By the way, the pictures featured are from "Amy Walks".

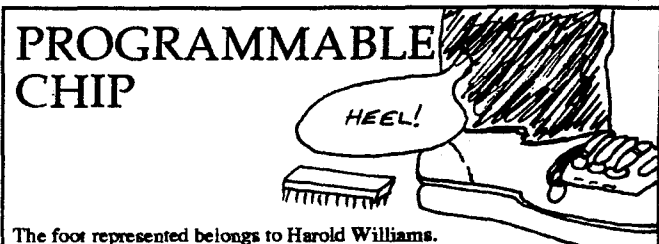
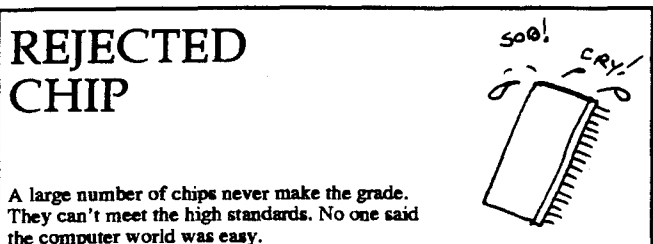
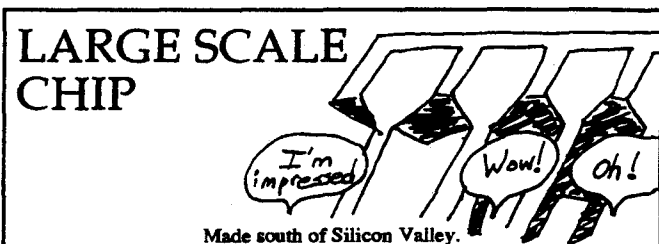
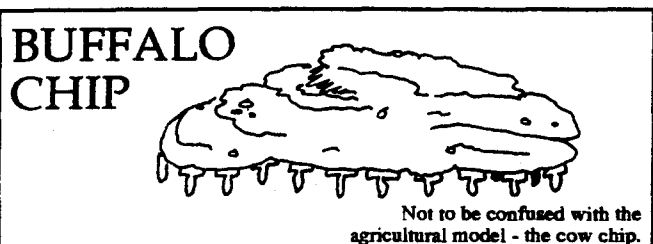
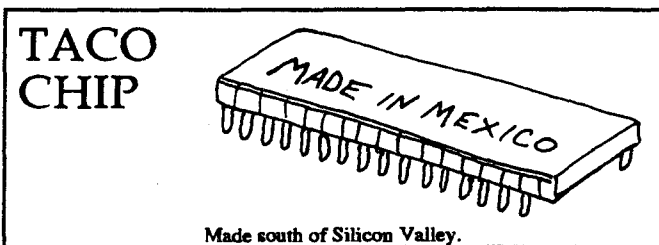
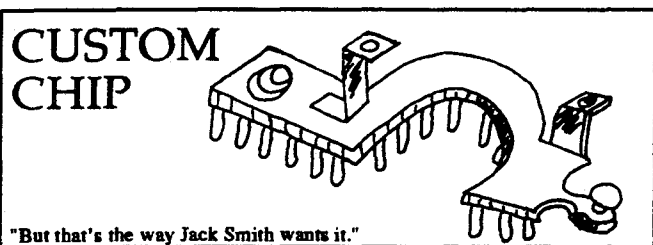
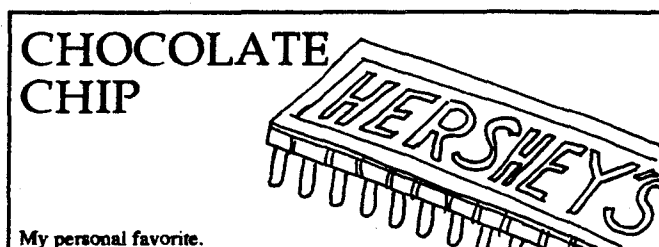
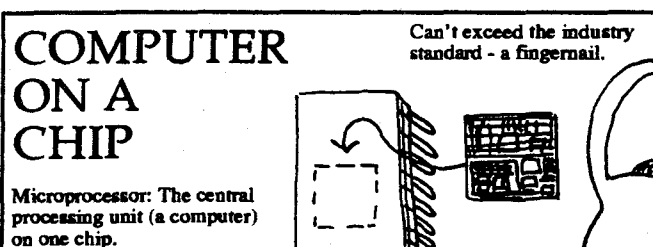
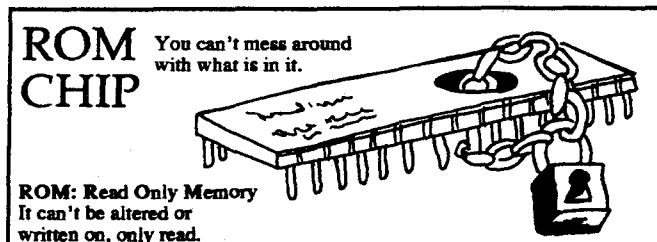
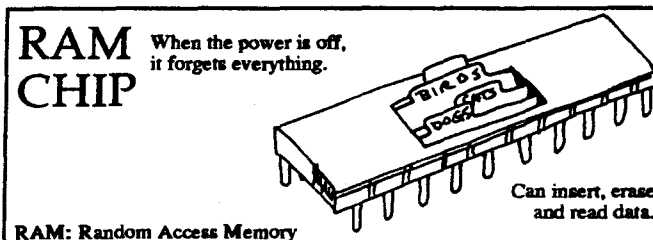


COMPUTER LITERACY

Part 1: Kinds of Chips

The secret behind computers and why they can do so much are these little things called chips. Whole electronic circuits and even entire computers have been shrunk down to a tiny piece of silicon. Here is a listing of the main types of computer chips.

Warning: There is a popular misconception that many parts of computers are edible. They are not. But a topical application of any 32K ROM chip to small eruptions may prove helpful.



A3000 Graphics Modes

by Peter Cherna

Reprinted from Ami Info

Here is the complete set of graphic modes supported by ECS and AmigaOS 2.0.

Mode Name	Size	Color	Monitor Type	De-Interlacer	Notes
Lores	320x200	(A)	NTSC	Scan-doubles	(1)
Lores-Interlaced	320x400	(A)	NTSC	De-interlaces	(1)
Hires	640x200	(B)	NTSC	Scan-doubles	(1)
Hires-Interlaced	640x400	(B)	NTSC	De-interlaces	(1)
Lores	320x256	(A)	PAL	Scan-doubles	(2)
Lores-Interlaced	320x512	(A)	PAL	De-interlaces	(2)
Hires	640x256	(B)	PAL	Scan-doubles	(2)
Hires-Interlaced	640x512	(B)	PAL	De-interlaces	(2)
SuperHires	1280x200	(C)	NTSC	disable it (*)	(3,7)
SuperHires-'lace	1280x400	(C)	NTSC	disable it (*)	(3,7)
SuperHires	1280x256	(C)	PAL	disable it (*)	(3,7)
SuperHires-'lace	1280x512	(C)	PAL	disable it (*)	(3,7)
Productivity	640x480	(C)	VGA	pass-through	(4,7)
Productivity-'lace	640x960	(C)	VGA	pass-through	(4,7)
A2024-10Hz	1008x800	(D)	A2024 (NTSC)	N/A	(5)
A2024-15Hz	1008x800	(D)	A2024 (NTSC)	N/A	(5)
A2024-10Hz	1008x1024	(D)	A2024 (PAL)	N/A	(6)
A2024-15Hz	1008x1024	(D)	A2024 (PAL)	N/A	(6)

Size:

The nominal sizes of each mode are given. The regular NTSC and PAL modes can be overscanned. The SuperHires NTSC and PAL modes can also be overscanned, though less proportionately than the regular NTSC or PAL modes. The two productivity modes can also be overscanned. The A2024 modes may not be overscanned.

Colors Notes:

(A): 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64(EHB), or HAM, from a palette of 4096.

(B): 2, 4, 8 or 16 from a palette of 4096.

(C): 2 or 4 from a palette of 64.

(D): 2 or 4 shades of gray.

Signal Type:

NTSC: Requires NTSC-type monitor, including 1080, 1084, television.

Some PAL-type monitors also can handle NTSC.

Most (?) multiscanning monitors can support NTSC rates.

PAL: Requires PAL-type monitor, including PAL 1080, 1084, television.

Some NTSC-type monitors also can handle PAL.

Most (?) multiscanning monitors can support PAL rates.

VGA: Requires VGA-class or multiscanning monitor.

A2024 (NTSC): Requires NTSC version of A2024 monitor.

A2024 (PAL): Requires PAL version of A2024 monitor.

De-Interlacer:

The de-interlacer is a circuit on the A3000 motherboard that works with a VGA-class or multiscanning monitor.

When enabled, the de-interlacer provides a VGA-compatible output on its 15-pin connector, from what would be NTSC or PAL or VGA modes from the 23-pin video connector. To use this, you require a VGA-class or multiscanning monitor.

De-interlacing means that instead of pushing out two fields in alternation at 60 (NTSC) or 50 (PAL) fields per second (30 or 25 full screens per second), the de-interlacer buffers one field and pushes it out with the other, so that both fields come out together, for 60 or 50 non-flickering full screens per second.

Scan-doubling means that a single (non-interlaced) field is pushed out twice as fast, and is replicated on adjacent lines. The result is a solid display of color, with no visible scan-lines.

The SuperHires modes require that you disable your de-interlacer. If you do, then the output from the 15-pin connector will become NTSC or PAL rate, and will not be scan-doubled or de-interlaced. If you leave the de-interlacer on, you will get a de-interlaced or scan-doubled display, though you will only see every second pixel horizontally, since the display-enhancer is sampling for 640 (plus overscan) pixels per line, and not the 1280 pixels that are being generated.

Pass-through means that the de-interlacer detects these modes and passes them through directly to the 15-pin VGA connector.

N/A is because the A2024 plugs in to the 23-pin video connector, and doesn't come near the de-interlacer and its 15-pin connector.

Notes:

(1) Requires NTSC Amiga or any Amiga with Super Agnus.

(2) Requires PAL Amiga or any Amiga with Super Agnus.

(3) Requires Super Agnus and Super Denise, and AmigaOS 2.0.

(4) Requires Super Agnus and Super Denise, and AmigaOS 2.0.

(5) Requires NTSC A2024 (with JumpStart or with AmigaOS 2.0)

(6) Requires PAL A2024 (with JumpStart or with AmigaOS 2.0)

(7) These modes take up twice the bandwidth of a comparable Hires mode, so Super-Hires Interlaced 4 colors is comparable in bandwidth to Hires-Interlaced 16 colors. As well, there is only one sprite available.

Amiga By-The-Loop

Brent Wood

Well, I'm sure you've read about the Amiga 3000 by now. Seems every magazine has a feature about it. And not to be outdone, we talked quite a lot about it at the last meeting. Several people from local dealers helped to answer the questions about the machine and the new OS.

Attendance topped out at about 38 this time and we started off the meeting with a ten minute video tape from Hard Warehouse showing off (you guessed it!) the Amiga 3000. I personally hope that Commodore will eventually get a well known actor to be their spokesperson and stop using some of the "talent" that appeared on this tape. Sheesh!

David then started a new feature that is to be a regular at all future meetings. It's a new user orientation that will cover things like how to operate in the WorkBench environment, how to customize your screens, control of icons, and possibly a little CLI help. This will help new users and "experts" as well. There are a lot of things to overlook and the help and refreshers will benefit everyone.

Then, Cary Blocker demoed two games from Leisure Genius. Risk and Scrabble are both versions of the board games of the same names. Risk

has especially nice graphics and several extra features not found on the "conquer the world" board game such

as allowing the computer to play up to three of the four player positions and my favorite, a "cheat" mode. And Scrabble is, of course, Scrabble. What can I say? Two other games available are Clue and Monopoly. All four games are licensed from Parker Brothers and are "official".

Door prizes this time were a couple of Fred Fish disks from Computer Emporium. Winners were Fred Sagor and Craig Bird. Computer Emporium also had a table of software for sale as they usually do. Nice touch.

The next meeting is the second Tuesday of June which is the 12th. 7:30 pm as usual, but at a new location. From now on we will be meeting at the North Richland Hills Community Center. It's just one exit east on Loop 820 at the corner of 820 and Rufe Snow. Be there and help us break the place in right. And, if you are having trouble with a particular piece of software, bring it with you. Someone can probably help.

Amiga Central

Jack Smith

The meeting began with a short demonstration of the ShareWare title of the month, QMouse by Lynn Erp. Qmouse was put through it's paces by our V.P. Ray Howard and was well received judging from the number of questions the audience asked about its use. Following the demo, the discussion moved into the Q&A session where we able to help one user solve a hardware related problem and fielded several questions about the features of the new club BBS. To set the record straight, the official time limit for all users is 90 min. a day with no more than 45 min. per call. An example might show it better: 2 calls @45 min. each=90 min. OR 3 calls @30 min. each=90 min. or 6 calls @15 min. each=90 min. and so on. One word of warning, don't call the BBS from 11:59 PM to 12:00 midnight since the BBS uses this

time to do internal housekeeping.

(Hot tip, check out ProWrite 3.0 at your dealer. It is almost a full desk-top publishing program for less than 1/2 the cost and a lot easier to use!)

The featured event was a fantastic demo of a Sony frame grabber by Charles Johnson. Using a DigiView digitizer, a common VCR, a Color Splitter by SunRize Inc., and a genlock (for showing the finished output on a TV monitor), all hooked up to Ray Howard's 2000. Besides basic real-time 24 bit color frame grabbing, Ray showed us numerous other special effects the Sony unit was capable of like simulated slow motion, zoom, pixelation and mosaics. When compared with a dedicated Amiga frame grabber the cost of the separate pieces totaled are nearly the same, but when you add in the versatility of the Sony, a color splitter and the DigiView the component approach makes more sense.

Many thanks to Charles and Ray for their efforts and we would like to extend a warm thanks to Computer Emporium for attending the meeting and providing the door prize, a Fred Fish disk.

Amiga North Dallas

Genny White

Once again we had a fine crowd in attendance, and it seems everyone has something interesting to say or a good question to ask. It's especially nice to have folks from other chapters join us... hope our gathering is always worth the trip! Too bad about our washed-out picnic (pass the potato salad.. glub... glub...). Hope they dry out so we can all get together at once.

Our "Pres" Craig Bird reminded us of the club "superdisks", special collections from the library that are grouped by function, including disk utilities, games, math, picture utilities, telecommunications, workbench utilities, and the ever-popular "miscellaneous". These are available at the meetings, and save a lot of "digging" through the library lists.

Hey, programmer types! We met Kevin Wambsganz at the meeting, and

he is trying to organize a club-wide Programming SIG. If you're interested, get in touch with him at (214) 221-8652. (Anonymous Question: What's a SIG? Special Interest Group. There IS a need for that jar at the meeting, isn't there?)

Of Course, the A3000 was discussed for a while. Seems Commodore did what they had promised in the new operating system, but nobody believed they would, so now very little existing software will run under 2.0. The release date has been postponed while Commodore decides how to handle the situation, perhaps by "downgrading" 2.0 to be compatible with more productivity programs. Meanwhile, you CAN boot your A3000 on 1.3 and run all your existing programs that way (but then the neat new stuff won't run... sigh). CANDO, by the way, is said to work under 2.0!

Our demo this month was

CHAPTER

presented by Bob Shary, our treasurer and video guru. The owner of Pro-Video Productions, Bob has

been able to collect and master a wide assortment of video hardware and software. This month, the spotlight was on Public Domain shareware offerings. One handy program, "Bartones", presents a "test pattern" of color bars to help you coordinate your RGB and composite images. Another,



"Marquee", is a somewhat limited but "pretty nifty for free" program for putting your name, or any other text you choose, in lights, in a typical rolling bank-sign format. "Slate" produces an image to plug on the front of a segment of video, identifying the contents for later sorting and editing, like the "take 2" movie slate. "Introducer" allows you to place text top, bottom, or center and have it scroll left-to-right, right-to-left, or simply appear, with an IFF sound file playing in the background. "Titlegen" produces text using variable fonts and colors, with a smooth top-to-bottom scroll. We also looked at "Broadcast Titling" (NOT a PD product), which generates very hi-res text using a set of built-in fonts.

You control details like colors for face, edge and shadow, size and direction of shadow, etc. to produce a very

professional-looking image which scrolls smoothly by. Now put all of these tools together with hardware like the "Supergen" gen-lock (highly recommended), and you can blend live video with the graphics and sound artistry of the Amiga AND your choice of messages overlaid on the

scene. Quite an impressive display! Thanks so much, Bob!

Oh, by the way, we discovered a new video function at the meeting. We were all scratching our heads over the proper term for that unpleasant distortion some less recommended gen-lock devices cause, when someone remarked "Oh, we just call

that '@#\$%!' Later, some contrary hardware refused to properly fade-to-white or fade-to-black or whatever... and we had invented the "fade to '@#\$%'"! (hee, hee... well, it was funny then!)

NEXT MONTH: Same time, same place, 3rd Wednesday (6/20), 7:30, Richardson Civic Center. Our guest will be Marilyn Cochran, who will present her impressive (and lengthy) Deluxe Paint III demo. This should be fascinating! We have a Deluxe Paint III demo disk in our library, for those who want to warm up their video tastebuds. Come one, come all! Bring friends and neighbors! YOU may be the lucky one to win a doorprize next time... like the Mystery Prize donated by Sonia King at Amazing. What was it? Come see!

Arlington/Grand Prairie Eddie Allen

With tax season over, the Saturday workshop once again was able to meet in it's accustomed room again. It was like a homecoming.

The Tuesday meeting in our lovely new surroundings was very lively this month. Our illustrious leader, Glen Herring, presented an enlightening discourse on Jiffy DOS, version 6. He compiled a nice summary sheet of the available commands that is a welcome addition to anyone's documentation. Jiffy DOS must be the most useful addition a person can invest in.

Peter Salfrank brought his Frankenstein C64. He showed what a knowledgeable person can do to extend the already versatile nature of the machine. He added an extension to the keyboard which allows him to plug in an external keypad which can be configured in various ways. Anyone who has typed in the machine language programs found in the magazines would really appreciate the keypad he demonstrated, which was an alpha/numeric adaptation. He also demonstrated a voice synthesizer

he pieced together from components available at the neighborhood Radio Shack. It allows a simple, and unadorned, basic program to produce a fairly good

computer voice.

In June, Brad Dumler plans to give a telecommunication

demonstration, including our new BBS. So if you wondered what all the fuss was about, come and see.

Until then, chill out.

Fort Worth Mary Louise Hagemeyer

Our May meeting is set for five days after the newsletter deadline, so we won't try to report what will have happened then.

The next meeting is just two weeks later, on June 9. Donald Tate, our chapter librarian, will talk about what is available in the club library, how to find it and how to use it. There are thousands of good programs in our library, and Donald will tell us how to find the ones we want.

The meeting will be Saturday, June 9, 1:30 p.m., in the library on Hulen Street.

H.E.B. Robyn Wilson

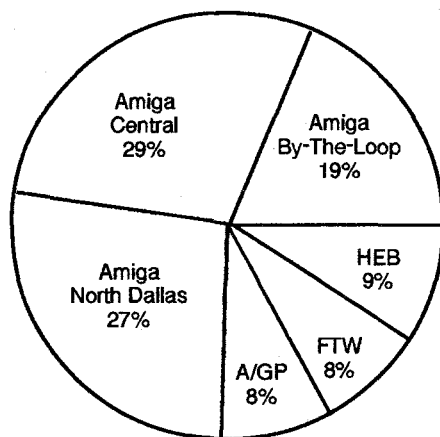
At the May 19th meeting there was a great turnout of members and visitors. Several beginner programs were introduced. These were mostly children's games but were still quite interesting. "Cave of the Word Wizard" is one of the programs. It teaches children spelling by using colorful screens and a talking wizard. He asks you to spell words in order to get through screens to capture the four crystals that are placed in different areas. Another program is called "Certificate Maker". It is a nice program that produces certificates to commend people with. It is compatible with most printers. "Kermits Electronic Storymaker" and "The Great Gonzo in Word Rider" are related to storybook writings.

They teach sentence structure with fantastic graphics and sound.

Okley Moss introduced the new Bulletin Board to the members. He mentioned

that the Graphics board has been taken off line and that if you call the number (268-4196), you will be automatically connected to the new board. This board is more concise than the last board. Here you can converse with other members who are online. You can find out what happened today in the "Today in History" option and also play games while online. "Mail and Messages" and "File Transfers" are options that still show up on the BBS.

The next meeting will be held on June 16th at the Hurst Recreation Center at 1:30 pm. We hope to keep the membership rising!



Attention C64 and C128 Users

Help is Available

An experience data base of C64 and C128 users has been set up and information is now available. If you have any questions regarding C64 or C128 computing please contact the MCCC Education Officer, Richard Meyer at 817-292-6387. I will try to match you up with someone who has volunteered to assist you in the area of your inquiry.

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The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff

The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership

Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$20 per year or \$12 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information

Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising

The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (consecutive three months): Full Page - \$36 (\$96); Half Page - \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page - \$12 (\$32); Business Card - \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles

Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles should be submitted as ASCII text. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText (address "MCCC"), or on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as Amiga IFF files, PageStream structured drawings, or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline

The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is the Monday following the third Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail to P.O. Box 813, Bedford, Texas 76095.

Extra Copies

Extra Copies of the MCCC News may be obtained for \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded to the club along with the required fee. Orders must be received by the regular newsletter deadline.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | | |
|--------|--|--------|---|
| Jun 9 | Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
1:30 pm - Grand Prairie Library
Grand Prairie
Jerry Hiatt, 817-649-1358 | Jun 16 | Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter
1:30 pm - Hurst Recreation Center
Mary Drive South of Pipeline
Eldor Luedtke, Jr., 817-377-4135 |
| Jun 9 | Fort Worth Chapter
1:30 pm - Southwest Regional Library
4001 Library Lane, Fort Worth
Rich Meyer, 817-292-6387 | Jun 20 | Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm - Richardson Civic Center
411 West Arapaho, Richardson
Craig Bird, 817-540-3360 |
| Jun 12 | Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm - N. Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N. Richland Hills
David Owens, 817-577-2304 | Jun 21 | Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm - Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington
Bill Keatley, 817-485-0666 |
| Jun 12 | Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
7:00 pm - Stoneridge Homeowners Assn. Clbhs.
500 Grants Parkway, Arlington
Glen Herring, 817-572-0489 | Jul 7 | MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 am - N. Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N. Richland Hills
Ned Kelly, 817-277-5825 |

July Newsletter Deadline - June 18

NORMAL MEETING SCHEDULE

1st Sat	MCCC Board of Directors	2nd Sat	Fort Worth Chapter
2nd Tues	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter	3rd Wed	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
2nd Tues	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter	3rd Thurs	Amiga Central Chapter
2nd Sat	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop	3rd Sat	HEB Chapter

MCCC NEWS

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